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THE MEANING OF CLEANING: THE CREATION OF HARMONY AND HYGIENE IN THE HOME

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Abstract: Towards the end of the 19th century cleaning and maintaining orderliness in the home took on increasing social and moral significance. New competences were required of women to achieve the desired hygiene and harmony in the home. The article focusses on the advice given in household manuals, books and articles to middle-class women in turn-of-the-century Sweden. The texts identified a number of threats to health and possessions which necessitated a constant battle against dust and dirt. The meaning of cleaning can be seen in relation to the "bacilla fright" created by science in late 19th century, but also to a rising middle class' desire for distinction and social respectability. Above all, women's efforts and skills to create order must be set within the context of the patriarchal family of the time. Women were to be competent housekeepers in the minutest domestic detail – but were wholly dependent on their husband's income and good will. This made for a contradictory situation where the goals of harmony and hygiene were not always easy to reconcile, and women were accused of both too little and too much of cleaning zeal.

Résumé: Vers la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, le nettoyage et le rangement des foyers connurent une importance sociale et morale grandissante. Pour atteindre le niveau d'hygiène et d'harmonie requis dans les ménages, de nouvelles compétences fûrent éxigées des femmes. Cet article se penche sur les conseils des manuels, livres et articles, traitant de la bonne tenue d'un foyer; conseils donnés aux femmes de classe moyenne dans la Suède du changement de siècle. Ces textes identifiaient un certain nombre de dangers pour la santé et les biens, dangers necessitant un constant combat contre la poussière et la saleté. La signification du nettoyage peut être comprise en relation avec la "peur du bacille" créée par la science de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, mais aussi par le désir grandissant de distinction et de respectabilité de la classe moyenne. Pardessus tout, les efforts des femmes et leur talent pour créer de l'ordre doivent être placés dans le contexte de la famille patriarchale de l'époque. Les femmes devaient être compétentes dans les moindres détails domestiques – mais étaient complètement dépendantes des revenus et de la bonne volonté de leurs époux. Ceci créa une situation contradictoire où hygiène et harmonie étaient difficiles à réconcilier, et où les femmes étaient accusées tant de trop de zèle que de trop peu.

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the 19th century cleaning and maintaining orderliness in the home took on increasing moral significance. Dust and dirt became signs of theretofore unknown risks to health and property. Disorder in the home was seen as a threat to the foundation of society. Just as the engineer now shaped the parameters of urban society in public life, the housewife was to keep the household machinery in order, and create a dust-free environment at home. To master the numerous newly discovered tasks required knowledge, vigilance and organisational skills. In this article I will discuss what these requirements meant for middle-class women in turn-of-the-century Sweden.[1]

The article takes issue with a certain conception of Victorian women as weak, emotional and insecure.[2] They may have been expected to show these traits – but more important was to possess *domestic competence*. The middle-class housewife at the turn of the century had to know how to perform a number of practical tasks – from how to scrub floors or polish mirrors, spread wet tea leaves over rugs to remove the dirt, or wash wallpaper with old French bread, to how to distribute the work over time and among the members of the household.

The meaning of cleaning was to combat threats to health and possession, but also to create a refuge from the dirty public world outside. The home was to be a source of family harmony and a sign of social distinction. Women's efforts and competences must therefore be set within the context of the patriarchal family of the time. The wife might have been the organiser of the home, but she was not its master. The husband's power rested on his income, on laws and tradition; the wife was dependent on his contribution and goodwill. It will be argued that the rhetoric of cleaning in turn-of-the-century accounts expressed the contradictions of this situation; it reflected the anxiety of women's dependence *and* the counter-power involved in their exclusive mastery of household activities. Women could set the rules, and enforce them. Paradoxical demands appeared; between harmony and hygiene, between authority and submission, between too much and too little of cleaning zeal – paradoxes which, we shall see, may be explained by the ambivalence of women's social role.

The Discourses of Cleaning

The material studied consists of pamphlets, handbooks and articles on the art of homemaking. Such texts began appearing in large numbers

from the 1870s onwards. Authors were mostly middle class and urban, and so were the readers. Most household texts were by women, who often presented themselves as "experienced housewives"; a few were by male professionals spreading the gospel of science to the home. Together, the texts identified a problem and a task not previously dignified with a separate discourse, and whose social significance was now created and elaborated upon.[3]

The time period studied goes from the 1870s when the texts began to appear, to the early 1920s when women's social status changed as did domestic ideals. The arguments and images discussed here were then no longer relevant.[4] We can discern a shifting focus. "Order" was more important than cleanliness in 1870s, and was then mainly associated with traditional, or religious values. Towards the end of the century medico-scientific arguments for improved hygiene led to somewhat of a "cleaning craze", which, in the early 20th century, was reacted against by a more "rational" or "professional" image of the housewife's role.

Despite this evolution, the rhetoric of the texts is remarkably consistent over the whole period. My analysis concentrates on the recurring motifs; the problems, rules and solutions identified to create a hygienic and harmoneous home. The texts included, first, practical instructions for how to wash a floor, eradicate moths, polish silver, or make the bedroom really fresh and clean. To this *descriptive*, handbook-style rhetoric was often added an *affirmative* one: the social and gendered order in which these practices occurred was presented as proper, desirable, or inescapable. Last, but not least, there was an *invocative* rhetoric: cleaning the home, it was argued, would keep chaos at bay, give worth to woman's state of subjugation, and create order and harmony in an otherwise threatening world.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ORDER

> A home without *order* is like a ship without a helmsman, driven hither and thither by the waves, sooner or later running aground on the dangerous skerry of disorder, ruin. No, the helmsman of the home must not let her hand fall from the helm, but hold a true and uncompromising course towards the constant goal, the harbour of order that safeguards comfort and continued existence.

Thus wrote I. Zethelius in *Rådgifvare för hemmet* [Guide for the Home] in 1910.[5] Keeping things clean and orderly was a matter of avoiding social and moral ruin. That was a social and symbolical as well as a practical task.

Cleaning – anthropologists remind us – is a matter of maintaining meaningful patterns in existence.[6] In clearing and cleaning we separate wanted from unwanted material, "junk" from that which is to be saved, "dirt" from acceptable wear and tear. This activity is symbolically charged. What is seen as dirt varies from one time period to another, between classes and individuals. The same applies to tolerance of disorder.[7]

The period we will discuss here was one in which order and cleanliness were raised to important social goals. Before the 18th century, or even later, cleaning had not been seen as a particularly central task, neither in the home nor elsewhere.[8] People, especially in the countryside, lived their lives in what we would consider rather filthy surroundings. During the work week no one had time to clean. Some cleaning was done for Sunday. It was mainly the Christmas and Midsummer cleanings that marked the annual rhythm and the difference between everyday and holiday.[9] Thus, cleaning had a definite ritual significance. It was linked to religious calendars rather than to hygiene requirements or social prestige. As the English historian Leonore Davidoff has pointed out, up to the 17th and 18th centuries lifestyle differences between rich and poor were expressed by the quantity and type of food they consumed, what gold and silver ornaments they owned, and what clothes they wore, but not in how neat, clean, and polished things were in their homes.[10] Only later, did this become an almost manic preoccupation.

The Home as Social Project

During the 17th century a striking and pedantic cleanliness with strong ritualistic features developed in the Netherlands. Houses and their immediate vicinity were to be kept spotless and impeccably clean. Everything was scrubbed, varnished, and polished. This was all the more surprising, according to historian Witold Rybczynski, in that the Dutch themselves were not particularly clean. There were no bathrooms or public bathing facilities.[11]

Keeping the home clean was not a struggle for health and hygiene. Rather, argues historian Simon Schama, it was a question of symbolically upgrading the primary cell of society – the home.

The family household formed the foundation of the Dutch Republic's structure. Spotless homes were a formal prerequisite for a properly run society. At the same time, a strong symbolic and practical line of demarcation was drawn between the home and public life. The home was a separate and special place. Here, intimacy and pedantic cleanliness expressed a moral contrast to the crass materialism that permeated society in this colonialist and mercantile state. High morality and materialism could, thus, coexist in society in a way that satisfied a strong Calvinistic faith.[12]

The cultural line of demarcation between the dirty world out there and the pure world of the Home, which the Dutch drew at an early stage, became increasingly prominent during the 19th century also in Western societies without Holland's specific history or form of government.[13] In the immoral world of the market, the well-ordered Home was seen as a sanctuary and cradle of beauty and high moral standards. Previously depreciated tasks of removing filth and keeping things in order took on new stature. As in Holland, it was the women who were given this civilising mission. To be sure, the man was the provider in the home, but the wife's concern was, as one Swedish writer put it, the "home's *perpetuum mobile*, the unremitting, quiet, invisible driving force" that created order and morality.[14] With a steady hand on the helm and with constant vigilance against the storms of indifference and the skerries of negligence, the housewife was expected to guide the domestic ship into the harbour of harmony.

In the Swedish texts, the creation and maintenance of order and cleanliness were presented as the essence of the woman's work in the home. She was to conduct a constant defensive war against those almost cosmic forces that threatened the stability of existence. Otherwise, ruin and spiritual misery were imminent: "Every day in an untidy home is one rung downward on the ladder to the heaven of happiness," Agathon Burman warned in 1875.[15] An ideal of perfect order was presented where rooms were clean and tidy and warm, clothes and bedclothes were clean and aired, and everything was in its proper place. No disruptions due to the unpredictability of things or material wear or the capricious nature of people were to be allowed.[16]

Ambitions and Distinctions

We may wonder at this constant preoccupation with order. Clearly it had a lot to do with the middle class family's desire for social

distinction. In the dynamic world of the market economy, industrialisation and urbanisation, the success or failure of the members of a broad "middle class" of professionals, salaried employees, merchants, entrepreneurs and civil servants was, to a great extent, their own doing. Their own abilities, efforts and knowledge determined their social placement, not social connections or inherited money. In this context, the material order of the home became important as a social marker. Conscientious cleanliness became a way of marking a distance to the aristocracy's supposedly more careless ways. More important, however, was the distinction to the classes below. A well-ordered home became a sign of *competence and social respectability*: "The difference between civilised and uncivilised people is seen more clearly in their cleanliness, just as the degree of refinement in various homes can readily be measured by this yardstick", wrote one Swedish handbook writer in 1904.[17] Poverty and low moral standards were blamed on the housewife's ignorance. Here is Ebba Rodhe, founder of the Home Economics Training School in Gothenburg, in 1893:

> Housewives' lack of knowledge in household matters is one cause of the working class' poor status... Their homes are messy and poorly kept, their clothes dirty and tattered, so that the sense of order and cleanliness disappears among both young and old. The husband is driven out of the house to the pub and the children into the streets. Many a man who did not have bad tendencies from the beginning thus became a drunkard and many a child a good-for-nothing.[18]

"[W]omen of the lower classes do not understand the art or are incapable of keeping filth away and *therein* lies the uglification of their homes... They never properly learned or have forgotten the art of straightening and cleaning," maintained Elsa Tenow in her influential book *Solidar* in 1905.[19] A beautiful, well-kept home was a sign of breeding and social standing. To maintain the desired order cost time and knowledge – but the effort was necessary to prevent any association with the classes below.

The Order of Things and Family Harmony

More important, however, was a positive and self-assured ideal of how things should be. The new middle classes wanted to create a new kind of *Home* for family happiness and domestic harmony.

Swedish housing researchers have shown how a preoccupation with one's own home, its planning, construction, and furnishing, underwent an expansive growth around the turn of the century.[20] There was a strong longing for beauty behind the – to our eyes dark, heavy, and difficult to clean – Renaissance furniture style that influenced many a well-to-do home towards the end of the 19th century. There was a kind of *horror vacui*: all empty spaces were hidden, white was an abomination, there were drapes everywhere, tassels, ornamental palm trees, gold frames, dark walls, and carpets. The outside world was screened off.

A reaction against this style became important towards the turn of the century. Light, air, colour, and simplicity should characterise the home. This ideal – based in Sweden on the writings of hygienists and social reformers and depicted in public home exhibitions and in the showpiece homes of architects and artists – was reflected in the handbooks. To their standard requirements of order, cleanliness, precision, and thrift was added a call for "good taste." Simple beauty in the home would create people in harmony and contribute to serene social development.

The new ideal of simplicity was seen as better suited to the upwardly striving middle class, with its often modest income, than the overburdened furniture style of the pompous apartment. Middle class gaze may have been upward towards the consumption habits of the upper class, but its member's financial means were not up to their ambitions. Again and again the importance of thrift and caution was pointed out, of "living in accordance with one's position," and not giving in to social pressure or the temptation of advertising. Boundaries were drawn between the "appearance" of things and their "true value." A moralising *imperative of genuineness* appeared in the texts. "Finery and ostentation" were to be avoided, furniture was to be used as furniture and not as decoration or showpieces, Goodness and Beauty to be joined by Truth, etc.[21]

Purchasing, caring for, and preserving this carefully acquired property was the special task of the woman. "Waste not," it was said over and over again with emphasis. This required cleanliness and discipline. "Disorder and indifference gnaw like a worm at our fortunes, great and small," Mrs. Laura G. warned in 1902 in *Oumbärlig rådgifvare för hvarje hem* [Essential Guide for Every Home] (a best-seller in five editions since 1888).[22] The housewife constantly had to "let her vigilant eye peruse the stores of the home. For most of us the chattels and belongings in the home are the only capital we can

store up and it is a capital that requires our constant and vigilant attention. We must keep it all in good condition and not neglect its daily care in any manner," argued an anonymous writer in *Svenska Husmodern* [Swedish Housewife] in 1877.[23]

Objects were endowed with a moral function. They were to witness unpretentiously of a family life of simple habits and togetherness. Let us hear an early advocate of this ideal, Mathilda Langlet, the most well-known adviser to housewives of late 19th century. In her book *Husmodern i staden och på landet* [The Housewife in Town and in the Country], which appeared in numerous editions since 1884, she preached the housewife's practical and moral mission. Her task was to gather and quietly activate the family in the unpretentious, but harmonious environment of the home.

> [In the study] the family gathers in the evening about the pleasant, round table in front of the sofa when mama's lamp has been lit. Here, the family father unabashedly smokes his cigar with coffee and his evening pipe. Here, tales are told and yarn wound, elephants and horses cut from paper, patterns are drawn for use with the fret saw, handkerchiefs are hemmed, and homework done. The chairs are a bit worn, true, the rocker somewhat rickety, and the sofa has lost some of its youthful freshness, but nowhere is there such cheer as here...[24]

Harmony and Male Power

This idyllic picture conceals a family pattern built on a fundamental asymmetry of power. According to the marriage laws in effect during the period in question, the wife was under the guardianship and mastery of her husband. The wife's personal rights were summarised in her matronage, meaning that she was in charge of the "inner housekeeping." According to the formal paragraphs, it was her duty to foster and care for the children and to perform or organise the housework. Thus, the housekeeping work was the wife's obligation and the counterpart to the husband's duty to provide.[25]

The husband we see in the housekeeping literature is the family provider. The wife is the one provided for. She must "not forget that her place was second," it was pointed out, for example, in the journal *Hem* [Home] in 1897.[26] This led to constant concern over the husband's well-being. He had power over the money. He could easily fall into "making scenes and showing a hot temper."[27] His slightest

wish must be fulfilled, "since it is... he who, by his labour, bears the cost of supporting the entire family and since, without him, its members could not exist", Langlet emphasized in 1884.[28]

The husband's work was vital to his self-esteem, to the family's sustenance and social status. On the other hand, the struggles of public life left the husband "dejected and irritated by adversity, full of righteous indignation" that could not be vented there. The home was his sanctuary. There he could demand the obedience and admiration so often denied at work, enjoy "rest and invigoration," happiness and delight.[29]

The tranquility of the home was also meant to prepare the husband, and the sons of the family, for coming battles in the male world outside. Its precise order, "from attic to cellar, in work and in accounts" must give the family members "the spiritual backbone" needed to resist the temptations of public life. This was often stated, for example, in I. Möller's *Konsten att vara huslig* [The Art of Being Domestic] in 1917:

> Good habits build character and provide spiritual backbone. Good habits implanted in the home are a dear treasure for the young, when they go out into the world. Good habits give strength to the spineless and help withstand many a temptation in moments of weakness, and good habits give added strength to the strong.[30]

Increasingly, in the 19th century, the men turned away from public towards family life as a source of personal and social pleasures.[31] But the change was partial and precarious. "Man's calling, his pride, ambition, and longing for temporal benefits" always threaten to take him away from the home, as do his patriotism and lust for profits, the handbooks said.[32] In the final analysis, the order and harmony of the home was the wife's only insurance against being abandoned. The husband always had the "option of fleeing from an unpleasant home", "to the bar, the pub, the gaming table, the theatre..."[33] The wife, on the other hand, had no real means of providing for herself. Therefore, the man's needs must be law in the home.

In the accounts I have read, there is strong tension between the competent woman who controls and runs the home and her subservience to her husband, between her technical and organisational expertise in the minutest domestic detail and her being declared incompetent in the world of men. The woman was supposed to be the serving, calming creature with intuitive understanding of the

man's slightest wish. At the same time, she was to be the determined helmsman, with a firm hand on the rudder. To be sure, the husband was legal master of the house. He was to be attended to and looked after. But the texts also depict the woman as the *de facto* ruler of the house. She was, in the words of I. Zethelius in 1910, the actual governor of this "state in miniature".[34] She was the legislator and police of the home. She developed the home's "unwritten law" of punctuality, duties, and rights, a "model order" leading to cleanliness and love of labour, an order that protected and prepared one for battle in life outside the sphere of the home. As we shall see, the threats to this order, and the means of restoring it, were defined in this field of tension between subservience and authority.

THE THREATS TO ORDER

Nature and the Vulnerability of Things

Constant and vigilant work was required, first of all, to hold the destructive forces of *nature* at bay. "After all, cleaning ... is a rather negative task by which we combat the processes of destruction and dissolution with which nature implacably threatens our possessions: rust, dust, mould, moths, etc.", Gertrud Norden pointed out, in 1924.[35] Agents against fleas, roaches, rats, insects, flies, gnats, ticks, mosquitoes, ants, vermin, lice, moths, and other natural enemies were listed, for example, in Hagdahl's handbook of 1885 with practical hints for everything in the home.[36]

The texts vacillate between a soberly practical and a morally outraged tone. Despair over this constant and defensive cultural battle against invisible enemies is often expressed. Order in the home was seen as a kind of "Penelopean web that the wife sits down to continue each morning and which, a constant source of anxiety, unravels each day anew," the journal *Svenska Husmodern* wrote in 1877. After all, nature's threats to things were *everywhere*:

> There are yet other enemies in the house, quiet, but ever active demons that seek unremittingly to destroy all therein. A grain of sand or dust is caught in the curtain and wears away a thread; smoke gets in and blackens the glass; moths get in the upholstery; the gilding is darkened by moisture; the meat is spoiled and the butter is made rancid by the high heat; a great, ugly spot has appeared on the new tablecloth; that

> hateful nail there ripped a hole in your dress; there, the lock is broken on the door, the bell cord pulled off, etc. Not today, tomorrow or the day after, but day after day, unceasing, your entire life; at first it is unnoticeable, not at all worth the effort, but tomorrow it is worse than today and the day after the damage is already impossible to calculate.[37]

Nature's gnawing at beloved things led to indignant outbursts in the midst of otherwise quite detached descriptions of cleaning techniques: "It feels indescribably degrading and helpless that the most treasured thing we have, our home, our memories, the things to which we are attached and the clothes in which we are comfortable, become repulsive and unpleasant as soon as our care for them wavers in the least," wrote Célie Brunius in 1917.[38]

The threat was not just against things and possessions. More dangerous still was nature's attack on the health and working capacity of family members.

Dust

Towards the late 19th century a new kind of sensitivity arose towards the new dangers discovered by natural science. Pasteur's theory of bacteria gave rise to a general mistrust of everything: water, air, the things themselves.[39] "Uncleanliness arises in the air, everywhere we live and move," Lotten Lagerstedt pointed out in 1894. "Some is in gaseous form, some hovers in the air as a fine dust."[40] Only science knew how bad the situation was: "[T]he microscope has ... shown us how our daily dealings are subject to and surrounded by deadly microbes, the cause of all manner of disease," *Mitt hem* wrote in 1905.[41] Two years later, the journal listed with delighted indignation what had been found "in a microscopic study of dust between a pair of double windows": "Bits of quartz and coal, grains of lime, wool, cotton, and linen threads, grains of starch, fly wings, bird feathers, vegetable hair, twelve different kinds of fungal spores, pollen from various types of plants, two kinds of infusoria, a number of algae and bacteria ..."[42]

In everyday life, the general distrust focused on dust, the visible sign of invisible dangers, of decay and ill health. "Dust is one of the home's most dangerous enemies and it is up to each and every one to try and eradicate it or at least to prevent it from collecting in rooms," Lagerstedt admonished.[43] Again and again the texts described the numerous "seeds" whirling around in the dust.

"Dust should be despised, for dust always contains bacteria," which could penetrate the body and cause discomfort and disease, wrote Möller in 1917. Their dangers lurked everywhere:

> They are found everywhere and in all places and no one can avoid coming into contact with them. They hover in the air we breathe, fall into our food, attach themselves firmly and deposit themselves on everything, where there is room only for a grain of dust. *But they are primarily in dust and dirt.* Everywhere there is dirt, there too lurk the foes of our health, and perhaps of our lives... In crevices in the floor, in dark, dank corners, in cellars and such places, they may lie dormant if the dirt is long left untouched, only to revive once again after entering the human body in some manner and reproduce with dizzying speed.[44]

The very comfort of the middle class home contained these seeds of destruction. Dark, heavy curtains and rugs were unhealthy, Langlet argued in 1891, since they collected "seeds of disease, all kinds of wandering and flying bacteria, bacillas, microbes, and what else they are called, these invisible entities, that in recent times have begun to embitter our existence."[45] Upholstered furniture, Norden complained in 1913, takes up dust from the air "like a sponge sucks in water." And she continued:

> Carpets, plush covers, curtains, etc. are absolutely impossible to keep free of dust. With every movement of the air, with the least puff of wind or draft, each time the door is opened and closed, even when someone simply enters the room dust is stirred from such objects and is breathed in by those present in the room.[46]

The *watchful eye* was the housewife's ally in the constant battle against this creeping menace. Kamke, for example, told her reader in 1910 that you must "be observant and often look under bureaus, chairs, and tables and let your finger test for danger on objects seldom dusted.[47] "Remember to seek out... [dust] in the most inaccessible places, under and behind heavy pieces of furniture that are seldom moved, on top of the tiled stove – everywhere, just where you least expect it!" *Hemtrefnad* [Home Comfort] wrote in 1899.[48] The threat was everywhere but possibly most, I. Norden warned, in "'dead corners', in which the air is stagnant and where trash and dirt accumulate": behind furniture, in cellars, and on staircases.[49]

In 1895 the journal *Idun* announced a contest for the best way to "destroy dust in our homes." The prize-winning essay, appearing under the name "Dixi," gave detailed advice for a "rational cleaning" of rooms. Here, as in many other texts, we will find a condemnation of the "errors" commonly made by others in the battle against dust, and a passionate defence of one's own method for correct dirt removal.[50] If we are to believe the handbook writers, most people during this period lacked the "common horse sense" which made them dry sweep the floors instead of using the "modern" style, where dust should be *bound*, with the help of wet rags:

> A worse abomination [than dry sweeping] cannot be imagined and this is a worthy counterpart to dry sweeping the streets. The dust swirls up to high heaven, but only to be deposited again after a time on all objects in the room [Ingrid Norden complained in 1913]. Better than sweeping in this manner would be to let the dust lie where it lies. In that case, at least, it would cause less harm and aggravation and not just change places once a day.[51]

Hygienism became an important influence in turn-of-the century Sweden. Stockholm in the mid 19th century had been one of the filthiest cities in Europe, with a mortality rate that was higher than in other comparable cities.[52] Medical doctors presented arguments against dust and dirt, advocated improved building standards and increased personal and domestic cleanliness. Dust and dirt were a "sanitary danger", they warned the housewives, and had to be transported away. Behind their admonissions lay a concern for the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases, especially in low-income families in unhealthy and crowded dwellings.[53]

In the household manuals for middle class women, the battle against dust and bacteria became part of an aesthetic/moral/hygienic program. Cleanliness was to permeate not only the housewife's habits and thoughts, but also the entire house, its planning, and its possessions. Dust-collecting beds, curtains, and upholstered furniture should be replaced to facilitate work and promote health. Daily dusting and cleaning of the entire apartment or house was recommended. In addition, there should be weekly cleanings and two or more major cleanings a year. This was the norm that was advocated in greater or lesser detail long into the 20th century.[54]

Bad Air

To the "dust neurosis" and "bacilla fright" brought on by Pasteur's and others' discoveries, was coupled a strong aversion to bad air.

Since the 18th century a highly developed *sense of smell* had become an ally in the modernising professionals' battle against disease and poor health. As historian Alain Corbin has shown, it was used to demonstrate the need for city planning, drainage ditches, and other urban infrastructure. During the 19th century the sense of smell also became an important tool for guaranteeing *household* cleanliness.[55]

In household, but also in medical texts of the late 19th century we will find a certain confusion as to the origin of infectious diseases. Bacteriological *theories* were accepted by a majority of the leading figures in the Swedish medical corps by the early 1890s, historian Ulrika Graninger claims. But she has also found that, in more concrete and practical circumstances, there was a considerable amount of "theoretical bewilderment". There was a delay before bacteriology left its mark upon the individual physicians' and the collective medical corps' way of thinking about disease:

> One reason for this delay may be the dominance of hygienics which permeated both individuals and society. Many of the hygienic measures resulted in the decline of a number of contagious diseases, in spite of the fact that, "bacteriologically speaking", the "wrong" idea about the cause dominated. However, because the measures gave positive results, thought continued along "miasmatic paths".[56]

In medical texts directed towards the practicing physician or the general public, the miasma theory long coexisted with bacteriological arguments for a clean and healthy home. The theory saw health risks as originating in the spontaneous combustion that was assumed to occur in bad, stagnant air. People were warned to breathe in the stagnant and unhealthy air of overcrowded dwellings. Life styles had to change, dwellings and hospitals to be contructed in the countryside, full of fresh air.

Also in manuals directed towards the housewives we find this traditional recourse to miasmatic theories. Disgusted descriptions abound to drive home the need for fresh air. Nature's decomposition products create stinking uncleanliness, housewives were told. Ferment and decay were everywhere. "Sweat, fat, and toxic varieties

of air ... *that are constantly excreted through the skin and in other ways*" make the air impure and foul smelling, Ingrid Möller pointed out in 1917.[57] Bacteriological arguments were also invoked to hammer home the need for fresh air. Bacteria thrive in dark, dirty, stuffy rooms, Dr Berg wrote in 1924: "Untidiness and bad air breed disease, first by direct contamination of the blood when unhealthy vapours are inhaled and, secondly, by the increased chance of infection." The results were "rickets, anaemia, consumption, and numerous other sickly states."[58] Colds and flu resulted from "homes that had become imbued with bacteria and then not sufficiently aired," Elise A. maintained in 1914.[59] Other writers pointed to "poor complexion, headache, and weak nerves ... [as] an almost unavoidable punishment" for not following the "law" of fresh air.[60]

In this context, the *plain board floor* became a sensitive, class-related issue. The smell of scrubbing inexorably revealed a lack of hygiene in the house and, thus, a lack of respectability. The dirty scrub water ran down between the boards and rotted in the double flooring, becoming "fertile soil for rot and disease-causing fungi," Norden stated in 1913. "The spaces between the floor boards form litle swamps in miniature, [Dr Bergwall stated in 1904], where all bacteria, including those causing disease, find the most excellent of hiding places, and where they much longer than elsewhere can stay alive and poisonous".[61]

An unpleasant, musty smell distinguished such apartments, indicating ferment in the dirt and the emanation of gaseous poisons.[62] An ideological battle for and against the traditional plain board floors was waged in the columns. The architect Lars I. Wahlman gave his opinion in 1902:

> I have seen a good old floor, scrubbed hundreds of times, broken up; I have seen the double flooring below billowing with worms, worms that had been my neighbours and fellow builders for years – and I drew my conclusions as to the suitability of unpainted floors and scrubbing.

And he continued: "A painted and varnished and oiled floor is a small cost, once and for all, but the scrubbing brush, the floods of dirt, the stench of filth, the recurring up-and-down-turning of the home is gone for ever, and in return you get this polished, neat impression given by the painted floor."[63] Oiling and varnishing the floor was thus recommended, and around the turn of the century, those who could afford it replaced the naked planks with linoleum floors and the scrub brush with a vacuum cleaner.[64]

To combat stench, the sources should be eradicated, doctors argued, and advocated complete cleanliness of body, clothing and kitchen. In the household manuals and articles, however, *airing* seemed even more of a moral imperative, often based on the "scientific" estimates of physicians and sanitary engineers of how much fresh air was needed per minute and cubic meter.[65] "Open the windows" was the motto in *Hemtrefnad* in 1914. "Let in air, air, and more air," *Mitt hem* wrote in 1909. Incessant airing of rooms, bedding, and clothing was recommended in text after text. "Air in the rooms shall *be renewed several times a day*," I. Möller insisted in 1917. "It is not enough, as some people believe, to let the window remain open long enough for the *foul smelling* air to leave. For the air is not always clean just because the uncleanliness cannot be seen or perceived by the olfactory organs."[66] The texts give precise rules for airing: so and so many minutes' draft during cleaning, airing after every meal, open windows before going to bed, at night, in the morning, airing schedules for the summer, the winter, for the children's room, the bedroom, etc.

Thus, there was a persistent plea for new habits in the home; knowing how to remove dust, dirt, and impure air was part of the educated housewife's competence. The incessant fight against nature's threats can be seen as the domestic counterpart to the activities of professional doctors, sanitary engineers and building inspectors in public life. Sewage and city planning, on the one hand, airing and dusting, on the other. Each in his or her own sphere was expected to contribute towards the creation of a clean and healthy society, based on the new awareness that science had brought.[67]

Servants as Hygienic Hazard

The threats also had human carriers. Cleanliness was an economic and cultural commodity that was unevenly distributed, as was knowledge of the dangers of dirt and foul air. "Ignorance, negligence, laziness, and old prejudices ... prevent thousands of families from having a home as clean as a Japanese home and air as fine as the air in Östersund [a mountain town in the north of Sweden]," Dr Henrik Berg, a central figure in the fight for cleanliness, remarked in 1924.[68]

This is not the place to discuss the various attempts by the middle class to teach the working class order and cleanliness.[69] We will

simply say a few words here about the threat to order the *servants* – a necessary ally in the battle against dirt – presented with their lack of middle class education and their supposedly different attitude to the demands of cleanliness. According to de Frese (1870), servant girls must be constantly goaded, since "from forgetfulness, indifference, or sloth, they often neglect the requirements of cleanliness."[70] Langlet's book is full of accounts of the unpleasantries that "ignorant farm girls" who did not "appreciate ... tidiness" could bring about: food had a slight flavour of containers never cleaned, "gnawed bones, herring necks, boiled potatoes, etc." were put aside and allowed to "stand and sour", etc.[71] The examples are numerous.

Kitchen odours, in particular, came to symbolise lower-class presence in the middle-class home. Especially dishwashing – a task never performed by the housewife herself in homes with servants – was performed in a manner that was "negligent and filthy ... often almost unbelievably so," I. Möller said in 1917. Then she presented an almost delighted, detailed description of this filth and its unpleasant stench:

> The water is turbid and repugnant, the dishwashing implements are soiled and sour, and the work is done in a slovenly and poor manner, often with greasy and filthy hands. For example, a shiny smooth plate offers poor conditions for bacteria, while china that is rough and covered with a layer of grease – leftovers from the dingy dishwater and greasy washcloth – provide an excellent place to which bacteria may cling. The same applies to greasy and dull silver, which is often washed quite casually, even in an otherwise proper home. Other dishwashing may be judged with the eye, but poorly washed silver "smells silver," as they say. The metal does not smell, but the nauseating, aforementioned layer of grease that has entered in chemical reaction with the silver under the effects of the air, creates the unpleasant odour.[72]

Such morally charged paragraphs on repugnant stench created by an ill-bred lower class against which the middle class could not defend itself, appear in many, otherwise prosaic, texts. In the midst of a dry description of how to dust and beat furniture, for example, Norden (1913) erupts with a disgusted outburst against those "souls serving in the kitchen [who] ... sear and fry with the kitchen door wide open ... so that the smell of grease and cooked herring, rancid meat, cabbage, and burnt peas and milk reach up to the very rafters."

> [Then this stench drifts] into the apartments where it titillates the inhabitants' olfactory organs while, at the same time, it bears eloquent witness as to what the families on the other floors are having for dinner or supper.[73]

Being able to be *private* in fresh-smelling, well-ventilated homes was the desirable arrangement, a privilege the upper and middle classes strove towards in the home of the 19th century.[74] Middle-class women were able to live up to the desired ideals of comfort and cleanliness, since *other* women did the heaviest and dirtiest housework, away from the sight of their masters. When the activities of the "serving souls" nevertheless invaded the middle class family's private life with stench and decay, cooking odours and burning smells – the reaction of disgust and indignation was strong.

"Natural" Feminine Disorder

Chaos, however, also threatened from within their own ranks. Middle-class women had to discipline their *own* feminine nature for the sake of order and cleanliness.

Turn-of-the-century women were in a dual symbolic position. They were seen as being closer to nature, by reason of childbirth and nursing. Their spiritual state and health were, it was thought, strongly affected by their reproductive organs.[75] At the same time, it was the task of women to discipline and civilize Nature. They had to educate uncivilised children, eliminate dirt, create order among material things. This position between Nature and Culture was existentially ambiguous and potentially both physically and morally unclean. Again and again the texts criticised women for their supposedly "natural" tendencies towards indolence and filthiness, negligence and untidiness.

> When an [untidy woman] dresses or undresses and, all the more so, when she makes a grand toilet, it is not long before all the furniture in the bedroom, the dresser, chairs, sofa, tables, and even the beds are littered with discarded, more or less intimate, items of apparel. Petticoats lie on the floor where she climbed out of them, hairpins, combs, and toiletries are strewn on the floor, wisps of hair, pomade and makeup spots dirty the dresser, soap lather and water are splashed around and the entire bedroom is in a state of chaos and confusion ... [and] ... bears witness to untidiness and slovenliness.[76]

"Most women's" manner of caring for their personal hygiene is reprehensible, one writer stated in 1906. If we simply "consider the manner in which they treat their hair brushes..., the many careless female hands that meet ours..., the dragging skirts, the waist of a dress in which dust and dried skin accumulate for years in the seams, the black or grey corset that the owner has proudly worn month after month..."[77] Again and again it was argued that women's unhygienic clothing habits really had to be changed: "This irrational fashion [of wearing long dresses] is a clear evidence of how little developed the sense of cleanliness and tidiness is even within the upper layers of society, and how much ignorance there is still to eradicate", complained the radical reformist Dr Öhrvall in 1900.[78] "How many bacteria are not dragged into the apartment by these terrible trains", Dr Berg asked.[79]

The personal cleanliness of the lady of the house was after all to be an example to others. "When a housewife is not clean with her own person, she seldom is with other things, and then cleanliness throughout the entire house is of a highly dubious nature," Langlet maintained.[80] Norden shuddered at the thought of how it must look in the bedroom of a daughter who had a slovenly mother – hardly in accordance with the "concept of unadulterated and maidenly purity and the delight one would like to imagine." Instead, there was the danger that it would "be destroyed by ruthlessness, negligence, and disorder, not to mention things even worse..."[81] Norden was not the only one to associate physical cleanliness with moral innocence: "If our mind longs for cleanliness, then we will suffer no filth in any form," [one writer exclaimed in 1909]. Clean in my mind and in my children's, clean in my home, clean in the kitchen... and everywhere," and a "strong hatred of all that is dirty."[82]

Thus, the civilising process in the home must begin with the woman herself and go on each day, incessantly. Constant vigilance, discipline, and hard work were needed to tame woman's feminine nature, to create purity and cleanliness. "Stained clothing, torn, poorly attached trimmings, unkempt hair, curlers, slippers down at the heel – such things can transform the loveliest little wife into a shrew," Langlet warned.[83] Therefore the housewife had to rise a half hour earlier in the morning to deal with her unclean body – "to wash herself, comb her hair, ... and brush her teeth before it is time to work" – and then at all times try to discipline her disorderly nature.[84] Anything less would be unhygienic, unhealthy, and unappetising.

"HOLDING AN UNCOMPROMISING COURSE TOWARDS THE HARBOUR OF ORDER"

To avoid the chaos caused by natural enemies or by women's, children's and servants' more or less "natural" slovenliness, cleaning and airing were not sufficient. Orderly patterns must be created in the home. Two major ways were advocated: spatial organisation and temporal organisation.

Spatial Organisation

"Dirt," says the anthropologist Mary Douglas, involves dangerous mixtures of categories:

> Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining table; food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom or food spattered on clothing; similarly bathroom equipment in the drawing room; clothing lying on chairs; out-door things in-doors; upstairs things downstairs; under-clothing appearing where overclothing should be, and so on. In short, our pollution behaviour is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications.[85]

"Dirt is only something in the wrong place", said also Dr Öhrvall in 1900, with reference to some unknown authority.[86] "Everything in its place" became a maxim that was repeated *ad nauseam* in turn-of-the-century household manuals. Confusion and chaos were imminent if distinctions were not maintained. "Order consists not only in having a room cleaned, so that nothing 'stands out'. That which is not visible must have its specific place and *be in that place*," Mathilda Langlet pointed out emphatically in 1884.[87] Temporary placement was not tolerated. *Everything* must be put back in its rightful place immediately after use, otherwise things would accumulate and the "tangle become more and more difficult to unravel."[88]

The anxiety expressed a new situation; there were indeed *more things* than before – knick-knacks, curtains, rugs, books, furniture – to keep track of in the middle class home. They represented a capital and had, as we have seen, to be protected again wear and decay. New, stronger classifications also appeared, where certain things and activities had to be kept away from public sight. "Backstage" – the kitchen, bathroom, children's rooms – was the sphere of women,

servants and children, seldom visited by the men. There, nature was close by, taken in hand in its "raw" form and civilised, to be presentable on the frontstage of the home.[89]

In the living rooms and salons, nature was banned other than in exotic, but tamed, form. There were palms and other forms of nature that had been rendered harmless, and which required suitable treatment. ("Perhaps you have elk antlers or other horns, or perhaps even a small crocodile? How are you to care for it?" asked *Husmoderns bok om Hemvård och Klädvård* [The Housewife's Book on Home and Clothes Care].)[90] In this sphere a cultivated order should reign. All indications of unpleasant household work – odours, cooking sounds, the confusion of housecleaning – were to be avoided, or were permitted only when the husband was not there.

The Bedroom as Border Zone

The bedroom, now often called the "sleeping room," underwent an interesting development. During the 19th century, this room passed symbolically from front stage to back stage. During the 1890's it became a room that was disengaged from the rest of the living suite, devoted entirely to sleep and rest. No company or visits were allowed there, as had been the case previously. The children were to have their own bedrooms, as would the servants. The practice of sleeping several people in a bed was condemned.

A number of ambiguities were manifested in turn-of-the century discourses about the bedroom. It formed a kind of border zone between nature and culture, where chaos constantly threatened to take over. Supposedly this was where the middle-class body's right to a private, well-aired, and odour-free sphere was to become reality. In real life, however, the room had a "tendency to become the most disorderly and untidiest" part of the apartment. Men's and women's possessions intermingled, waste and odours were produced. It was here that the housewife had to first prove her mastery of nature's destructive forces. "The greater one's prosperity and culture, the greater weight one places on the bedroom and its suitable appointments," Roswall stressed in 1904. Extra vigilance was required here to keep chaos at bay.

The bedroom was also a border zone between public and private. It must be put in order every day, "so that one need not be ashamed if some outsider should happen to cast an eye therein", Roswall said.[91] Social respectability must be maintained. "Among good

housewives, nothing is condemned so much as the *contrast* between that which is intended for outside eyes and that which is meant for the family itself."[92] "Behind the scenes *first*, on the stage *second*, not vice versa," Reimer admonished in 1909 with reference to the bedroom, "the true hearth of hygiene in the home."[93]

This civilizing mission must begin first thing in the morning. "The bedroom must always be in total order before cooking begins in the kitchen," Mrs. Laura G. stressed in 1902.[94] All bedding must be removed, immediately aired out for at least an hour before cleaning begins – but first, Norden points out, "all things used, especially for the lady's toilet, must be put away, after first removing hair, which any person laying claim to being tidy and orderly must never leave in these toilet articles."[95]

Medical advice books and household manuals advocated sun, fresh air, and cleanliness in order to get rid of the air spoilage caused by human "expiration and transpiration" in the bedroom.[96] "Soiled clothes, unclean linen, and dirty shoes must never be allowed to stay in the bedroom."[97] Nor were "... cigar remains, left-over food, and the like" allowed to remain there.[98] A white bed-making apron, sometimes white gloves, were recommended for bed-making. An environment similar to that of a hospital was the ideal – or at least something like an "English bedroom", with its iron bedsteads, Spartan furniture, and bright range of colours.[99]

A lively discussion arose before the turn of the century concerning the most hygienic way to arrange the bedroom. This debate reflects a shift in power over home planning. Those whom housing researcher Greger Paulsson calls "engineering architects" – highly trained male engineers – had devoted themselves mainly to the larger, impersonal units as they planned their ideal homes: city planning, boulevards, the organization of sewage and water works. The new hygienism beginning in the 1890's, on the other hand, dealt with the most private and intimate: clothing, the bedroom, personal cleanliness. To a certain extent planning then became a question for a "middle-class intelligentsia" of women.[100] These women were the handbook writers, philanthropists and emerging household experts. They were backed in their endeavours by medical men, and they acted within a sphere between the public and the private, bringing ideals of hygiene and rationality to the home.[101]

Towards the end of the century, however, a reaction appeared against the strict ideals of hygienism. In an *Idun* article in 1898, E.G. Folcker took up the gauntlet for the canopied bed – a dust

collecting abomination, according to the advocates of hygienism.[102] Author Laura Fittinghoff attacked the hygienist ideal in that same magazine in 1901. When it took over a home, its pleasantness was lost, she wrote. Instead of the fine, warm, cosy bedroom where the family and guests felt at home, where mother lovingly worked at her sewing table and knitting basket, where flowers and pictures brightened the room, there was barrenness and coldness. Iron bedsteads, marble shelves and washstands replaced flower pots and grandmother's white comforters – and the "windows are open around the clock." The bedroom was now to be used only for sleeping. Socialising and work were to be done elsewhere. Thus, Fittinghoff complained, feminine Harmony disappeared when Hygiene took over in the home.[103]

Temporal Order

The bedroom discussion leads us to another key dilemma. It is not possible always to have everything maximally clean. Cleaning was a never-ending task. Mrs. Laura G. spoke of the "sickly nervousness" born of the fundamentally unending task of taming and ordering nature. It could be cured, she said, only by a "moral compulsion placed on oneself to *always be guided by the clock.*"[104]

A plea for an almost manic control over one's time use runs through the period examined here. Thus, this was not something that belongs only to a later debate, inspired by Taylorism.[105] The home had to function like clockwork. "The clock must rule over everyone, over man and wife, for the first paragraph in the law of order commands us to utilise time properly. Waste destroys resources, disorder destroys half one's life," Burman warned already in 1875.[106] Without discipline in matters of time, the housewife would succumb and order never be achieved: "[W]ith each lost hour a part of life is lost," Veritas wrote in 1900.[107] Cleaning, in particular, involved the constant risk of temporal collapse:

> Of the multitude of small tasks, first one, then another will take on gigantic proportions [Célie Brunius wrote in 1917] and the more their execution is postponed the more impossible it seems to become to catch up. A definite order for the tasks of the day and week are both easier to implement and more useful here than in kitchen chores, but once you lag behind it becomes exceedingly difficult to restore that order once again.[108]

The remedy was a careful division of the housewife's time and assignment of each task to its proper time. Detailed daily timetables were listed in the texts: for the housewife herself, for a middle-class home, for a rural household, for the week, for Sundays and holidays, for daily cleaning, for weekly cleaning, for major housecleaning, for cleaning days, and occasional tasks...[109] Time was divided up into what seems to be more ritual than strictly needed cleaning sessions. In addition, all tasks had to be done in a certain sequence and at a specified time, which could be altered only in case of emergency – and everything, as Langlet pointed out, "that was to be done in the house, the housewife must keep in her head like a timetable."[110]

The Master's Order and the Ruling of the Home

The control of time and space was intended to defend the home against nature's threats to health and possessions. But the body of laws governing everyday life was not gender-neutral in its application. The father of the house had "sole... right to be waited on."[111]

> Every meal had to be served at precisely the proper time, so the husband would never have to wait and perhaps be prevented from enjoying the time of rest after supper to which he has a right [Veritas pointed out in *Hemmets rådgifvare* in 1900].[112]

A housewife who did not subtly create the order of the house in accordance with the husband's more or less explicitly stated needs, risked his irritation, and the dreaded loss of household harmony:

> Many an otherwise good man becomes exacting and irritable if the wife fails to heed some of his habits, some of his whims, perchance. If he must wait for his supper, his morning paper; if his overcoat is not brushed, his match box not in its place; if the curtains are drawn crooked, if the piano is open, if the maid is wearing shoes that are down at the heel...[113]

Ultimately, as we have seen above, the entire home was threatened with collapse if the husband did not receive the service he demanded. He would abandon it for the temptations of the gaming table, the theatre, or the pub.

In the texts, the man appears as a large, moody child, "seldom capable of producing thorough cleanliness in his external appearance."[114] He was a source of filth and disorder:

> With what dissatisfaction [the housewife] furrows her brow when her thoughtless lord and husband, who like all other men

> values his comfort more than his furniture, *sans façon* throws himself onto the sofa, wrinkles the tablecloth, or even leans his pomaded head against the wallpaper, a sofa cushion, or such [wrote Mrs. Laura G. in 1902].[115]

The point, however, is that the husband (in the home) *did not need* to exercise restraint and control. That was the privilege of patriarchal power: to avoid the responsibility of maintaining the boundaries between order and chaos, to *be spared* dealing with dirt, waste, stench and pollution... That was completely the task of the wife. "This constant work to maintain [order]... is *her* task, which the husband *cannot* understand or perform at all," one writer wrote in *Svenska husmodern* in 1877.[116] In the 19th century these degrading tasks were ideologically and practically converted into their opposite: a civilising mission and a savoir-faire that gave the woman the authority she lacked in public life.

Gender Power and the Contradictions of Cleaning

Cleaning, in this context, created a genuine dilemma. On the one hand, it was meant to create the order and harmony that the husband expected in his home. On the other, this messy and essentially endless job was supposed to be done without his even noticing it. The wife "should make sure the home is as harmonious as possible at all times, so that everything related to scrubbing and cleaning is done while [the husband]... is away."[117] She also had to "take care that no soapy odour or trace of moisture remain in the room and, above all, protect all manuscripts, papers, books and tools from contact by profane hands..."[118]

The matter of the "*master's room*" was particularly complicated. "Most middle-class heads of household spent most of their time at home here," historian Birgit Gejvall wrote in her study of homes in 19th century Stockholm. Its doors were most often closed, something which meant there was a private space inside, the father's own territory, separate from the rest of the apartment. The children were seldom allowed in and cleaning had to be done there with great care.[119]

Two types of logic seemed to clash in the master's room – the feminine and the masculine type of order:

> To men [Folcker wrote in *Idun*, 1898], order consists in having all materials for the work with which he is involved, all books,

> notes, and the like "at hand." The feminine sense of order, on the other hand, requires that every object be in its place, books on the shelf, and all pieces of paper in various stacks, according to size.[120]

It was, however, the husband's order that ruled. Woe to the wife who tried to create her order in her husband's room. "A foolish ordering here can cause incalculable damage," Kamke warned in 1910.[121] "Putting his papers 'in order' is ordinarily to do him the greatest disservice. He always wants to do that himself," Roswall insisted. "Each scrap of paper must lie in the same place, an open book must not be closed, and even the least little trifle belonging to his work must remain undisturbed..."[122]

Responsibility for seeing that the husband's order prevailed rested with the wife and with none other: "No foreign hand may touch this," Roswall pointed out.[123] There was a constant risk that the uncultured servants would clear away the husband's books; that letters, notes and papers, "that in the eyes of the servant are of no import," would find their way to the waste basket or be used to light the tiled stove. With a shudder, the tale was told of John Stuart Mill's servant girl who thoughtlessly burned an irreplaceable manuscript by Carlyle, or of the cleaning ladies whose zealous scrubbing destroyed priceless musical instruments.[124]

During *major cleanings*, however, feminine subservience to the master's time and space was broken. In came the cleaning ladies and, like at a medieval carnival, the hierarchy was turned upside down. The women took over, their time schedule prevailed, nothing was in its right place – and husbands fled their homes, where their convenience was no longer law!

"Old time housecleaning", a 1941 text remembered, meant "a veritable state of siege":

> Least of all could the master of the house feel calm at such a time. No consideration was given to the sanctity of his private life or his ingrained habits when the furies of major housecleaning drove him from room to room like hunted quarry and if he was wise, he preferred to flee and be done with it, rather than stay and fight in vain against the enemy hordes who occupied his home.
>
> Everything was turned upside down, furniture and carpets were removed, if possible into the open air, lamps and chandeliers were taken down, pictures moved, and book collections

> removed from their shelves, only to be returned in what for their owner was the most incredible jumble, seldom in their proper place, but helter-skelter, costing him many hours of effort before he was able to restore his precious clarity and order.[125]

The upheaval created by major housecleaning underscored the latent power that was built into the woman's ordering skills. Order, thrift, and control gave power – and thus the possibility of gender-based and generational conflict. The wife's role included not only "tender, loving care" but also the right to organize things for others, to control them and to force them to work. A glimpse of this power is sometimes seen in the household literature. The housewife was, it was noted, the helmsman, legislator, and policeman of the home.[126] And not all husbands were thoughtless patriarchs. In fiction we sometimes see anxiety-ridden male helplessness in the face of women's ruling and bossing, memories of childhood and adult inferiority. The home, its order and priorities, as well as the husband's and children's well-being, were in the women's guiding hands, and power.[127]

THE COMPETENT FEMALE HAND

This power rested on competence. Keeping things clean and keeping them in order was *work*. It required knowledge and self-control.

Practical Competence

Practical competence was fundamental. Unlike the middle-class husband, who had been through a long period of general and professional training for his adult occupation, the wife was often unprepared for her complex task – at least according to the housekeeping books. Her studies had left her with a disdain for practical work. She presumably often went directly from obeying to organising, "from doll houses to duties".[128] Mothers, according to the literature, could not always be relied upon to transmit the appropriate knowledge of correct cleaning, of household chemistry or hygiene; and the servants often kept their knowledge to themselves. Therefore, the manuals were necessary, and ideally also a year or two at a household school.[129]

The texts often include the assumption of, at times, ridiculous incompetence in practical matters. Book after book point out that

dust rags were to be shaken *outside* the window and not inside it, from an upwind, not downwind, position; that dust and dirt should be swept up onto a dustpan and not into the air; that it was not necessary to stoop down and get water on your knees and in your lap when you scrubbed the steps and floor; that you could sweep with a long-handled broom, instead of constantly bending over with a short-handled one, and so on.

On the other hand, the experienced housewife – and the one who followed the advice of the handbooks – could proudly point to her extensive competence. She was knowledgeable in domestic chemistry and biology. She could stuff mattresses, combat pests, and furnish a home. She mastered the many practical aspects of daily cleaning: its intensity, frequency, scope, order, methods, and organisation. She was a good domestic engineer.

Competence in Management

This is not to say that she herself had to exercise all this expertise. Handbooks from the turn of the century often assumed that *someone else* performed the lion's share of the practical drudgery. The middle-class housewife was expected to dust and perhaps to clean her own bedroom. The rest was to be delegated to one, two, or three "maidservants."[130]

The housewife nevertheless had to be a competent supervisor and manager. Now and again she might also have to demonstrate her practical competence. The maidservant should be "aware that the housewife herself understands how to do chores and that she can do without the maid," Veritas wrote in 1900.[131] Mathilda Langlet admitted that she had never personally scrubbed a floor. She nevertheless held very definite opinions – which differed from those of her maids – as to how this work was best done.[132] The role of the housewife was presented as that of an educator and organiser – not always an easy task. In 1907 in *Hemtrefnad*, a certain A. Lundberg called for courses in the art of cleaning for maidservants. They would include "all existing details, such as sweeping, washing, scrubbing, window washing, care for cork rugs, cleaning carafes, and especially dusting."[133] During the new century, such maidservants became more and more uncommon, less and less competent, and more and more expensive, it was claimed. New, less authoritarian relationships had to be developed towards the servants in a changing society, where young women were more attracted to jobs in factories and offices than in the home.

Thus, the housewife's competence must include a friendly, but firm way of putting others to work. This also applied to other female family members – even though some resistance could be noted at times: "*Fi donc*" (sic), many say, according to *Idun*, 1895, "that my daughter shall have to sweep rooms when we have a maid to do it."[134]

Considerably less frequent was the need for male assistance. It did happen, however, more so in the 20th century than before: "That a gentleman himself can brush his clothes and shoes and, in case of emergency, sew a button [should] not in the least [mar] his manly dignity," Christine Reimer stated in 1909.[135] A man could perhaps even clean his own desk if, for nothing else, then for the sake of his own peace of mind: "This cleaning ... is not as difficult as one might think and is easily enough done," Ingrid Norden said encouragingly in 1913.[136] And in 1912 the journal *Vi och Vårt* [Us and Ours] pleaded in several articles that the children – particularly the boys – be allowed to clean, wash the dishes, brush shoes, etc.; character-building tasks that taught responsibility and respect for work in the home.[137]

Moral Competence

Still, overall responsibility for order was in the hands of the women. Cleaning, in particular, required a "truly strong and morally complete personality" [Brunius noted in 1917]. The work demanded "new heroism" every day:

> Wipe, rub, sweep, brush, beat eternally and then enjoy a moment when all is in its place – then a few hours later it is time to start again, this endlessly replacing a thousand little things.

No wonder that cleaning required "... much more will power, much more character and persistence than other domestic chores:"

> The temptation to neglect one thing or another, from turning the mattresses and shaking the pillows, to wiping the windows, changing the water in the carafe, the precise arrangement of the room after each change of clothing, comes anew each day.[138]

The housewife was strongly admonished not to cheat with the cleaning, take shortcuts and breaks. "It hardly need be pointed out that the time for cleaning should be used for that purpose and not for reading magazines and books or for standing and gazing out of the window,"

Handledning i husliga göromål [Handbook of Household Tasks] nevertheless pointed out in 1912.[139] A lack of perseverance was immediately punished. "What sad consequences have we not seen because a little shirt button was missing, a key misplaced, a single minute lost," Burman told his readers in 1875.[140] Again and again the housewife was reminded that she should never "compromise with herself or her own convenience."[141] Nothing must be neglected, everything should be observed and taken care of – at once.

Knowing Moderation

There was a key paradox in the imperative of order. Cleaning was necessary – but *too much* cleaning could destroy the material and moral fabric of the home. The competent housewife also knew how to exercise restraint and avoid excesses of cleaning zeal.

"Of all domestic concepts, neatness and order have a great penchant for growing into pedantry and thus wasted time, wear on furnishings, and a generally unpleasant atmosphere," Reimer complained in 1909.[142] It is possible to destroy *everything* in the home with too much assiduous cleaning, Möller pointed out in 1917: Oil paint disappears, wallpaper gets streaks, textiles and carpets become worn, polish is rubbed off...[143]

> Many homes are cleaned constantly and still nothing is ever in order and, despite all this effort and trouble, the furniture is in abysmal condition. Trifles and ornaments are broken, chairs and tables given all manner of flaws, tables and bureaus are full of scratches, and within not too long a time a beautiful new home has become a ruin.[144]

More dangerous than the loss of capital, however, was the loss of the *comfort of home*. "Scrubbing and washing too often bring constant disquietude and make the home a veritable house of torture for the family," wrote Mrs. Laura G. in 1902.[145] Warnings against the "tidiness passion" and "cleaning mania" became more and more common after the turn of the century. Christine Reimer spoke in 1909 of the need to *"dampen* the passion for cleanliness that is running rampant through some social strata... [and which] in some middle-class families has degenerated into a kind of mania."[146] "Far too many women exaggerate their duties [Holm pointed out in 1921]... and in their misguided zeal they are gripped by a kind of cleaning frenzy that, despite the greatest cleanliness and order,

destroys all the comfort of home instead of creating it."[147] And in a fascinating turnabout of the period's predominant message, Zethelius blamed the downfall of the family on the cleaning mania of the housewife. "Husband and children shun the home where the pedantic housewife becomes engrossed only in her own petty ideas", she – and others – maintained.[148]

Cleaning must be done, but in *moderation*, was the new message. The time-honoured 19th century preoccupation with major housecleaning several times a year was called into question in the early 20th century. *Mitt hem* (1906) rejected the very idea of such events "where the whole house is seized by spasms and the housewife herself, in the name of domestic comfort, is in such a tizzy that she becomes an affliction to those around her."[149] "Bacteria fright" was scorned by doctors,[150] and a new, more "rational" approach to hygiene was called for. "Major cleaning *should be abolished*, as it is out of step with the times," Elna Tenow maintained in 1905:

> It should be replaced with an effective daily cleaning, rendering all the fuss and to-do unnecessary, since nothing remains for major housecleaning and since it is barbaric to tear one's home apart and chase one's husband and children out of the house. Although not a man, I hate this ruffian and foe of domestic comfort as intensely as does any man and I was never able to appreciate that nirvana of powerlessness that our housewives say reconciles them to the trials and tribulations of major housecleaning.[151]

A number of proposals were made as to how the social effects of major housecleaning could be mitigated. As far as I can see, most entailed an *increase* in cleaning work.[152] Daily care could not be neglected.[153] A scaled-down major housecleaning was required each week,[154] or spring and fall housecleaning were to be extended over several weeks instead of several days, to reduce the inconvenience to the family.[155] In other words, with the imperative to reconcile hygiene and harmony the housewife had to clean *all* the time – but discretely and with a new kind of restraint.

The "cleaning craze" was also defended by some. "No household passion is more readily understood than the cleaning mania, and as unpleasant as it may be as it runs rampant and free, its results are a delightful reward for the effort." Brunius argued in 1917. The ends justified the means. Once the toil was over, the family could gather

in a clean, orderly, and fragrant home, the symbol of Homeyness in modern times:

> It is always with a feeling of respect, almost admiration, that I enter a room that has just undergone a thorough cleaning. I need not see it – I feel the cleanliness in the air upon my first breath and the impression is confirmed by the faint reflection of the chair legs in the floor, the clear and sharp contours of objects, the entire atmosphere of peace and tranquillity that engulfs you and gives you an unconscious feeling of well-being.

After all, Brunius concluded, it is on this "practical and unimaginative" orderliness that the "comfort of home, its fostering power, and its character as a haven from troubles stand or fall."[156] In this ode to harmony in the well-ordered home, she was backed by a chorus of domestic writers from the 1870s onwards. With a variety of voices they sang the praises of the housewife, her constant vigilance, organisational skills, and practical domestic competence.

EPILOGUE: THE MAN'S HAND IN THE HOME

In 1901 the British engineer H. Cecil Booth visited the Empire Music Hall in London. Not to listen to music, but to study a new American invention being demonstrated there. It was a machine that blew air into carpets, air that then supposedly was reflected against the floor and carried dirt and dust along with it into the machine as it was slowly moved forward over the carpet surface. But Booth was not impressed:

> I asked the inventor why it did not *suck* out the dust... The inventor became heated, remarking that sucking out the dust was impossible and that it had been tried over and over again without success; then he walked away.

But Booth did not give up. "I thought the matter over for a few days, and tried the experiment of sucking with my mouth against the back of a plush seat in a restaurant in Victoria Street, with the result that I was almost choked."[157]

Thus begins Booth's own description of the process that led to the first really useful *vacuum* cleaner. His invention, "Puffing Billy", soon made its triumphant journey throughout the world.

Unimaginable amounts of dust were found in public buildings and Edwardian salons. Cleaning became a male professional task.

> There is a saviour from all this nuisance [of major housecleaning] [the Swedish doctor Henrik Berg claimed in a lecture in 1905], and it is a company called "*The Vacuum cleaner*". Ladies and gentlemen, you must have seen that steam-engine standing outside houses, huffing and puffing, with a long hose up to the apartment which sucks out the dust. I believe that "The Vacuum cleaner"-method will replace major housecleaning in the future. I have made a firm decision to use one myself as soon as possible.[158]

A few years later the portable electric vacuum cleaner was invented and the cleaning task returned to the women in the home. At this time, another hero of technology appeared on the scene – an asthmatic school janitor in Ohio who was looking for a way to clean that would be easier on his health. In 1908 he screwed together an "electric sweeper" of tin, wood, a broom-handle, an electric motor coupled to a fan disc, a cylindrical brush, and as the tale is usually told, "one of his wife's pillowcases" to catch the dust that the machine brushed and blew in. A relative with a mind for business and with money W.H. "Boss" Hoover, began manufacturing the invention. With door-to-door salesmen and mail-order catalogues, it rapidly spread throughout the United States.[159]

The third hero of this tale is a Swede, a genuine entrepreneur. In 1908 Axel Wenner-Gren was looking for new products to sell when one day he discovered the American vacuum cleaner in a store window in Vienna. During the following years Swedish designers developed a Swedish version of the vacuum cleaner, which went on the market in 1912 under the name Lux. But there was an inherent problem with these early handheld apparatuses: to have any effect, they had to be made relatively heavy – too heavy for a housewife to carry around. The designers of the Lux agonised over the problem while working on their next model. Then their boss, Wenner-Gren, became impatient:

> "Give me a notebook," he said brusquely and he drew something on the paper. It was a drawing of a kind of sled. "Now, Sven," he said to engineer Carlstedt, his right-hand man for all design matters, "take a thick steel wire, shape it something like this, and we will *lay* the device on the sled, insert a hose

instead of the pipe, and anyone unable to carry the machine around can drag it behind them."

"That was an almost historic moment in the development of the Swedish vacuum cleaner industry," wrote Wenner-Gren's biographer, Gunnar Unger. "With his innate technical intuition, Wenner-Gren had achieved the ultimate design of the machine that has come to be the most sold and most imitated vacuum cleaner in the world."[160]

Heroes of Order and Cleanliness?

Three heroes of engineering history, three men in the battle against dust – with technical ingenuity, persistence and profits as their driving force. So different from the patient struggle of women to remove dirt, their morally charged and eternal task to keep order in the home. Men's battle against dust built major industries and created armies of male vacuum cleaner salesmen, designers, and repairmen. And women had to learn a new way of cleaning with the aid of machine technology.[161]

In the early 1920s, family laws were changed. Thus ended married women's legally sanctioned subservience to their husbands, if not their economic dependence. The context within which cleaning and other household tasks were performed was never to be the same. Tasks became a matter of efficiency rather than morality. Engineers and home economists preached the importance of household rationalisation; technology was expected to ease the housewife's task and free her to do more important things within or outside of the home. From the inter-war period onwards, the ideal of the well-ordered home and the competent housewife spread from the middle to the working class. Hygiene and comfort, rational housekeeping and technical competence was to characterize the "modern housewife" in all kinds of homes. This was a political project, backed by women's organisations and political parties, and part of the creation of a Swedish welfare state.[162]

But also this ideal was a short-lived one. Beginning in the 1960s, Swedish women abandoned their well-ordered home for salaried work. The full-time "housewife" would soon disappear as a distinct statistical category, and with her many of the earlier concerns.[163] Soon – in the late 1970s – the National Board of Consumer Policies would issue a publication arguing against "cleaning mania" and housewifely pedantry: *Clean at All Costs?* A government agency was

trying to get Swedish women to break the habits advocated by a century of experts, advertisers, and handbook writers; these habits were now seen as causing stress and overwork.

Ten years later even *dust* disappeared as a pressing public concern. The encyclopedia *Nordisk Familjebok* from 1906 devoted two and a half pages to the word "dust."[164] Ninety years later, in the 1990 *Nationalencyklopedi* [National Encyclopaedia], it was no longer included. The cleaning tasks – with their tedium and rewards – remain. They are still almost exclusively done by women. But the meaning of cleaning has become a *private* affair. The women's battle against dust and dirt has lost its aura of a civilising mission, and their competence is no longer part of a social project for order, hygiene and social harmony.

Notes

1. The article is based on B. Berner, *Sakernas tillstånd. Kön, klass, teknisk expertis* (Stockholm: Carlssons), chapter 2.
2. See for ex. K. Johannisson, *Den mörka kontinenten. Kvinnan, medicinen och fin-de-siècle* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1994), and the discussion in P. Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred* (London: Fontana Press, 1995).
3. How people actually cleaned their homes is more difficult to ascertain. See K. Sjöqvist, "Att skura golv", *Fataburen* (1970), 131–142 for a discussion of floor scrubbing in the 19th century; and T. Colling, "Tekniska hjälpmedel i 1800-talets kök" *Fataburen* Teje (1984), 113–128, who takes up technical aids in the 19th century kitchen. The household manuals discussed here provide much information on methods and implements.
4. After the first World War, marriage laws were changed, women got the right to vote, to enter almost all kinds of higher education, and to obtain higher level state positions. Household rhetoric changed towards emphasizing efficiency and technical change, and a professional corps of housekeeping experts emerged to give "scientific" advice on household management.
5. I. Zethelius, *Rådgifvare för hemmet* (Stockholm, 1910), p. 5. Italics in original.
6. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).
7. For individual differences, see B. Martin, "Mother wouldn't like it!; Housework as Magic" *Theory, Culture & Society* (1984) 2:19–36; M. Horsfield, *Biting the Dust. The Joys of Housework* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997).
8. C. Davidson, *A Woman's Work is Never Done. A History of Housework in the British Isles 1650–1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982).
9. J. Frykman and O. Löfgren, *Den kultiverade människan* (Lund: Liber, 1979).
10. L. Davidoff, "The rationalization of housework" in D. Leonard Barker and S. Allen (eds), *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage* (London & New York: Longman, 1976), p. 127 f.
11. W. Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986).
12. S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (London: HarperCollins, 1987), chapter 6.
13. Discussions of this development can be found, for Sweden in Frykman and Löfgren, *Den kultiverade*; for Australia, in K.M. Reiger, *The Disenchantment of the home. Modernizing the Australian family 1880–1940*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985); for Denmark: L.-H. Schmidt and J.E. Kristensen,

Lys, luft og renlighed. Den moderne social-hygiejnes fo,/dsel (Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1986) and T. Vammen, Tinne, *Rent og urent, Hovedstadens piger og fruer 1880–1920* (Copenhagen, 1986); for England L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes. Men and women of the English middle class 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); for United States: B. Ehrenreich and D. English *For Her Own Good. 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (London: Pluto Press, 1979).

14. C. Reimer, *Hemmets bok* (Stockholm, 1909), p. 38.
15. A. Burman, *Illustrerad Hushålls-kalender. Handbok i praktisk hushållning* (Stockholm, 1875), p. 5.
16. Davidoff. "The rationalisation". p. 130.
17. A. Roswall (ed) *Fråga mig! Handbok för hemmet* (Stockholm, 1904), p. 21.
18. E. Rodhe, *Undervisning i hushållsgöromål för skolbarn* (Gothenburg, 1894), p. 14.
19. E. Tenow, Elsa, *Solidar. En lifsfråga för hemmen, I–III* (Stockholm, 1905), part II, p. 110.
20. G. Paulsson (and collaborators), *Svensk stad Del 1. Liv och stil i svenska städer under 1800-talet* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1950); E. Stavenow-Hidemark, *Villabebyggelse i Sverige 1900–1925* (Lund: Berlingska, 1971); E. Stavenow-Hidemark, "Hemmet som konstverk. Heminredning i teori och praktik på 1870- och 80-talen" *Fataburen* (1984), 129–148; K. Wickman, Kerstin, "Bohaget – kvinnans trygghet och verk", in B. Åkerman *et al.* (eds), *Den okända vardagen. Om arbetet i hemmen* (Stockholm: Akademilitteratur, 1983), 230–273; K. Thörn, *En bostad för hemmet* (Umeå: Department of History of ideas, 1997). For international discussions, see A. Forty, Adrian, *Objects of Desire. Design and Society 1750–1980* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986); Rybczynski. *Hemmet.*; P. Sparke, *As Long as it is Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste* (London: Pandora, 1995).
21. See, for example, Veritas, *Hemmets rådgifvare* (Stockholm, 1900), p. 6; Reimer. *Hemmets bok*, p. 197. See Thörn. *En bostad*. pp. 153 ff for a discussion.
22. Mrs Laura G., *Oumbärlig rådgifvare för hvarje Hem* (Malmö, 5th ed. 1902), p. 3.
23. Anonymous, "Ett kapitel som borde intressera varje kvinna" *Svenska husmodern* (1877), 1:2.
24. M. Langlet, *Husmodern i staden och på landet* (Stockholm, 1884), p. 821.
25. G. Kyle, "Genrebilder av kvinnor. En studie i sekelskiftets borgerliga familjehierarkier", *Historisk Tidskrift* (1987), pp. 39, 45.
26. Anonymous, comment in *Hem* (1897), p. 81.
27. Langlet. *Husmodern.*, p. 32.
28. *Ibid.* p. 15.
29. Mrs. Laura G. *Oumbärlig*. pp. 10 ff.
30. I. Möller, *Konsten att vara huslig* (Uppsala, 1917), p. 25 f.
31. A. Briggs, *Victorian Things* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 220.
32. Mrs. Laura G. *Oumbärlig*. pp. 10 ff, A. de Frese, *Den ordnande handen i hemmet* (Stockholm, 1870), p. 8.
33. Langlet. *Husmodern*. pp. 13, 16. See also L. von Lagerström, *Hemmets rådgivare, Praktiska råd för hemmet och hushållet* (Gothenburg, 1924), p. 8.
34. Zethelius. *Rådgifvare*. p. 5; see also, for example, Veritas. *Hemmets*. p. 3.
35. G. Norden, Gertrud, *Styra och ställa* (Stockholm, 1924), p. 87. Like many others, she compared the negative task of cleaning to cooking, which was a "constructive act in which one takes several raw goods that are often useless on their own and creates a tasty and appreciated meal" (*Ibid.*). For a recent discussion, see J.J. Valadez and R. Clignet, "Household Work as an Ordeal: Culture of Standards versus Standardization of Culture", *American Journal of Sociology* (1984), 4:812–835.
36. H. Hagdahl, *Det bästa af allt! En nödvändig bok för hvarje hem* (Stockholm, 1885), passim.
37. Anonymous. "Ett kapitel". p. 3.
38. C. Brunius, *Sin egen tjänare. Husliga studier sommaren 1917* (Stockholm, 1917), p. 72.

39. Schmidt and Kristensen. *Lys*. p. 118.
40. L. Lagerstedt, *Kokbok för skolkök och enkla hem jämte korta anvisningar i huslig ekonomi* (Stockholm, 1894), p. 187.
41. E. Fletcher, "Hygieniska råd och anvisningar", *Mitt hem* (1905), p. 91.
42. R.D. in *Mitt hem* (1907), p. 33. The original information may have come from H. Öhrvall, *Renlighet och frisk luft* (Stockholm, 1900), p. 8.
43. Lagerstedt. *Kokbok*. p. 186.
44. Möller. *Konsten*. p. 18.
45. M. Langlet, *Ett eget hem* (Stockholm, 1891), p. 108.
46. I. Norden (ed), *Illustrerad handbok för hemmet* (Stockholm, 1913), p. 56.
47. H. Kamke, Hanna, "Städning", *Hemtrefnad* (1910), p. 301.
48. Anonymous, "Rengöring", *Hemtrefnad* (1899), p. 247.
49. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 58.
50. Dixi, "En rationel städning af våra boningsrum" *Idun* (1895), 84–85.
51. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 53; see also S. Nilsson, *Hushållslärans första grunder för skola och hem* (Stockholm, 1904), p. 65; Öhrwall, *Renlighet*. p. 18.
52. See the discussion in Thörn. *En bostad*. pp. 37 ff.
53. See e.g. E. Heyman, *Om luften i våra bostäder* (Stockholm, 1881); C. Wallis, *Hemmets hälsolära* (Stockholm, 1906); N. Lundberg, *Vägledning vid tillsyn över bostäders sundhet* (Stockholm, 1912); A. Christer-Nilsson, *Bostadens Hygien* (Karlskrona, 1926).
54. Langlet. *Husmodern*. p. 626; see also, for example, T. Holm, *Rengöring i hemmet* (Stockholm, 1921).
55. A. Corbin, *Le Miasme et la jonquille* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986).
56. U. Graninger, *Från osynligt till synligt* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1997), p. 264 (from Summary in English).
57. Möller. *Konsten*. p. 21. Italics in original.
58. H. Berg, "Renlighet", in L. von Lagerström (ed), *Hemmets rådgivare. Praktiska råd för hemmet och hushållet* (Stockholm, 1924), p. 49 f.
59. Elise A., "Öppna fönstren!" *Hemtrefnad* (1914), p. 11.
60. Fletcher. "Hygieniska". p. 91.
61. J.E. Bergwall, *Egna hemmets hygien* (Stockholm, 1904), p. 31.
62. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 53.
63. L.I. Wahlman, "En gård och dess trefnad", *Ord & Bild* (1902), p. 32.
64. See e.g. T. Thunberg, *Hälsolärans grunder* (Uppsala, 1893), pp. 6 f; Öhrvall. *Renlighet*. p. 16; H. Berg, *Hygieniska strövtåg* (Stockholm, 1906), p. 127.
65. Rybczynski. *Home*. See also *Mitt hem* (1905), p. 91.
66. Möller. *Konsten*. p. 38.
67. Most clearly stated in Tenow. *Solidar*. For later analyses, see E. Palmblad, *Medicinen som samhällslära* (Gothenburg: Daidalos); K. Johannisson, Karin, "Folkhälsa. Det svenska projektet från 1900 till 2:a världskriget" *Lychnos* (1991), 139–195. For sanitary engineers in Sweden, see B. Sundin, *Den kupade handen. Människan och tekniken* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1991), pp. 250 ff; for the relationship between sanitary experts and housewives in England, see P. Williams, "The Laws of Health: Women, Medicine and Sanitary Reform, 1850–1890, in M. Benjamin (ed), *Science and Sensibility. Gender and Scientific Enquiry 1780–1945* (Basil Blackwell, 1991), 60–88.
68. Berg. "*Renlighet*", p. 49 f.
69. See e.g. P. Aléx, *Den rationella konsumenten. KF som folkuppfostrare 1899–1939* (Stockholm: Symposion, 1994): Frykman and Löfgren. *Den kultiverade*. (1979); Johannisson. "Folkhälsa"; Palmblad. *Medicinen*. 1989; Åkerman *et al. Den okända vardagen*.
70. de Frese. *Den ordnande*. p. 4.
71. Langlet. *Husmodern*. pp. 81 ff.
72. Möller. *Konsten*. p. 66.

73. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 72.
74. Corbin. *Le miasme*. pp. 189ff; C. Dyhouse, "Mothers and Daughters in the Middle-Class Home, c. 1870–1914", in J. Lewis (ed), *Labour and Love. Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850–1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 27–47; P. Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt. Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920–1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).
75. Johannisson. *Den mörka kontinenten*.
76. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 66.
77. Anonymous in *Mitt hem*. p. 149. The writer then added: "If we consider, however, the unhealthy building system, the absence of bathrooms in our apartments which men have built, the untidy bakeries and slaughterhouses that men run and care for, all the dirt that escapes the eye of men's sanitation police, all the bans against spitting and pollution that apply only to men, well, then you have to stop and think again [whether men are much cleaner]."
78. Öhrvall. *Renlighet*. p. 17.
79. Berg. *Hygieniska ströftåg*. (1906) p. 65.
80. Langlet. *Husmodern*. p. 27.
81. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 66.
82. S. Melander, "Renhet", *Hemtrefnad* (1909), p. 95.
83. Langlet. *Husmodern*. p. 26.
84. Möller. *Konsten*. p. 33.
85. Douglas. *Purity and Danger*. p. 48.
86. Öhrvall. *Renlighet*. p. 16.
87. Langlet. *Husmodern*. p. 9.
88. de Frese. *Den ordnande*. p. 2.
89. See Davidoff and Hall. *Family Fortunes*; Dyhouse. "Mothers and daughters", pp. 29ff: Palmer. *Domesticity*. p. 146.
90. Husmodern, *Hemvård och Klädvård. Praktisk handbok* (Stockholm, 1930), p. 129.
91. Roswall. *Fråga mig!* p. 60.
92. *Ibid*. p. 63. Italics in original.
93. Reimer. *Hemmets bok*. p. 194. Italics in original.
94. Mrs. Laura G. *Oumbärlig*. p. 4.
95. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 63.
96. See, e.g. T. Kjellberg, "Våra sofrum", *Tidskrift för hemmet* (1907), 43–45; Melander. "Ett sofrum".
97. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 63.
98. Elise A. "Öppna fönstren". p. 118.
99. E. Stavenow-Hidemark, "Hygienismen kring sekelskiftet", *Fataburen* (1970), 47–54; Paulsson. *Svensk stad*.
100. Paulsson. *Svensk stad*. p. 28f.
101. Berner. *Sakernas*. chapter 4; Thörn. *En bostad*. passim.
102. E.G. Folcker, "Sofrummet" *Idun* (1898), 388–389; *Mitt hem* (1909), 127–128.
103. L. Fittinghoff, "Sängkammarinteriörer", *Idun* (1901), 299–302.
104. Mrs. Laura G. *Oumbärlig*. p. 7. Italics mine.
105. See J.-E. Hagberg, *Tekniken i kvinnornas händer* (Linköping: Tema T, 1986); Berner. *Sakernas tillstånd*. chapter 4.
106. Burman. *Illustrerad*. p. 8.
107. Veritas. *Hemmets*. p. 6.
108. Brunius. *Sin egen*. pp. 35ff.
109. See e.g. Roswall. *Fråga mig!* pp. 33ff; Möller. *Konsten*. pp. 34ff.
110. Langlet. *Husmodern*. p. 9.
111. *Ibid*. p. 78.
112. Veritas. *Hemmets*. p. 3.
113. Langlet. *Husmodern*. p. 15.

114. Roswall. *Fråga mig!* p. 22.
115. Mrs. Laura G. *Oumbärlig*. p. 12.
116. Anonymous in *Svenska husmodern* (1877), p. 3. Italics in original.
117. Veritas. *Hemmets*. p. 7.
118. J. Burow, *En moders ord till fosterlandets döttrar* (Stockholm, 1885), p. 148.
119. B. Gejvall, *1800-talets Stockholmsbostad* (City of Stockholm, 1967 (1954)), p. 228.
120. Folcker. "Sofrummet". p. 388f.
121. Kamke. "Städning". p. 302.
122. Roswall. *Fråga mig!* pp. 60, 68.
123. *Ibid.*
124. Norden. *Illustrerad*. p. 69; The musical instrument example is from Anonymous, "Stor rengöring", *Hemmet. Läsning för ung och gammal* (1890), pp. 506, 508.
125. I. Malmström (ed), *Hem och hushåll* (Malmö, 1941), p. 58.
126. Zethelius. *Rådgifvare*. p. 5; Veritas. *Hemmets*. p. 3.
127. Literary examples can be found in C. Hardyment, *From Mangle to Microwave. The Mechanization of Household Work* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988); Martin. "Mother wouldn't like it"; Horsfield. *Biting the Dust*.
128. de Frese. *Den ordnande*. p. 1; Tant Malla, *Den unga frun. Handledning vid de första osäkra stegen som husmoder* (Helsingfors, 1898), p. 1.
129. H. Haglund, "En tidsenlig uppfostran av husmödrar" *Dagny* (1888), 95–107.
130. See e.g. Adelsköld *et al. Hemmets*. p. 198 and E. Kleen, *Gwens bok för hemmet* (Stockholm, 1907), pp. 58ff, for detailed instructions on the division of labour among various numbers and types of servants.
131. Veritas. *Hemmets*. p. 8.
132. Langlet. *Husmodern*. p. 626f.
133. A. Lundberg, "Några ord om behofvet af kurser i städningskonst", *Hemtrefnad* (1908), p. 120.
134. Dixi. "En rationell". p. 85.
135. Reimer. *Hemmets bok*., p. 227.
136. Norden. *Illustrerad*., pp. 69f.
137. An article by Söderlind (1912) discussed the question, "Are Homes Hotels for the Children?" The children should help with the housework during their summer vacation. Another, anonymous, article (1912), p. 378, enthusiastically reported activities at the Åsgård's school camp for boys, where they learned to value household chores.
138. Brunius. *Sin egen*., pp. 34f.
139. *Handledning i husliga göromål* (Stockholm, 1912), p. 29.
140. Burman. *Illustrerad*., p. 7.
141. Anonymous, *Vi och vårt* (1912), p. 215.
142. Reimer. *Hemmets*., p. 52.
143. Möller. *Konsten*. p. 88.
144. Norden. *Illustrerad*., pp. 51f.
145. Mrs. Laura G. *Oumbärlig*., p. 7.
146. Reimer. *Hemmets*., p. 183. Italics in original.
147. Holm. *Rengöring*., p. 8.
148. I. Zethelius, *Tidskrift för hemmet, dess sysslor och intressen* (1907), 1:2.
149. *Mitt hem* (1906), p. 4.
150. See H. Berg, *Hygieniska ströftåg* (Stockholm, 1910), pp. 29ff.
151. Tenow. *Solidar*. Part II, pp. 147f.
152. There were also pleas for simplified cleaning; see, for example, the articles on "Domesticity in Step with the Times" in *Mitt hem* (1906), pp. 3–4, and "Unnecessary Dusting" in *Vi och Vårt* (1911), p. 402.
153. Mrs. Hein, *Sin egen jungfru* (Stockholm, 1923), p. 93.

154. Langlet. *Husmodern.*, p. 626; Kleen. *Gwens bok.* p. 60.
155. Holm. *Rengöring.*, pp. 45 f.
156. Brunius. *Sin egen.*, pp. 72 f.
157. Quoted in Hardyment. *From Mangle.*, p. 81.
158. Berg. *Hygieniska* (1906), p. 128.
159. Hardyment. *From Mangle.*, pp. 86 f.
160. G. Unger, *Axel Wenner-Gren. En vikingasaga* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1962). pp. 40 f.
161. It is "no easy task," Mrs Hein maintained (*Sin egen jungfru*, 1923). "to handle a vacuum cleaner. It is much more convenient to whisk around a bit with a rag. But the utility of the vacuum cleaner is not that it is so easy, but that it is so good. One must exert oneself greatly and work quite slowly to utilize it to the fullest, but if this is done, the vacuum cleaner is effective beyond all praise ... It is possible, if so desired for the sake of superstition, to wipe [the walls] afterward with a cloth" (p. 95). As recently as 1956, however, the vacuum cleaner was still not considered a tool "of primary use," according to B. Holme *Städning* (Stockholm, 1956), p. 11. Numerous texts pointed out that many people could not affort a vacuum cleaner; see B. von Hofsten *Familjen vill veta* (Stockholm, 1942), p. 179; K. Henrikson, *Glatt och lätt hemarbete* (Stockholm, 1957), p. 35. For the adoption of vacuum cleaners in Sweden, see A. Nyberg, *Tekniken – kvinnornas befriare?* (Linköping: Tema T, 1989).
162. Berner. *Sakernas*. Chapter 4; Hagberg. *Tekniken*.
163. C. Axelsson, *Hemmafrun som försvann. Övergången till lönearbete bland gifta kvinnor i Sverige 1968–1981* (Stockholm: SOFI, 1992). Nyberg. *Tekniken*.
164. Signature Wrng "Dust", *Nordisk familjebok* (Stockholm, 1906), columns 1214–1220.